



# National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

## *Laredo, TX*

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

### BACKGROUND

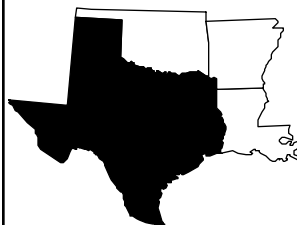
EPA selected the City of Laredo for a Brownfields Pilot. The City of Laredo is the hub of international freight movement between the United States and the Republic of Mexico. The area's predominantly Hispanic population is ranked among the poorest in the nation. The City's industry and land uses remained virtually unregulated until the 1980's, resulting in many environmental abuses of which the City has limited knowledge and scant resources to effectively address.

The City's pilot workplan originally planned to investigate, cleanup, and redevelop the Paso del Indio, a 100-acre City-owned property that lies between downtown and the Rio Grande River. In February 1996, the City, with the assistance of EPA Region 6 and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, investigated the Paso del Indio property. This investigation indicated that the property was not contaminated. Based on this finding, the City has refocused the Pilot efforts to a river front property currently owned by the Texas Mexican Railway.

### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Pilot are to create a green corridor between the U.S. - Mexican border on the

### PILOT SNAPSHOT



*Laredo, Texas*

**Date of Award:**  
September 1995

**Amount:** \$200,000

**Site Profile:** The Pilot targets a waterfront property on the Rio Grande River currently owned by the Texas Mexican Railway.

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<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

Rio Grande River and facilitate commercial development. The reuse of selected brownfields is expected to spur economic redevelopment on the riverfront and increase interest in environmental remediation, crime prevention, and improve the Rio Grande River's water quality. Additionally, the project will support the international treaty to protect the Rio Grande River from further environmental degradation and will facilitate implementation of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA).

The involvement and active participation of area stakeholders, including financial institutions, downtown businesses, hospitality and tourism operations, adjacent residential neighborhoods, the railroads, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, Texas Parks and Wildlife, Immigration and Naturalization, U.S. Customs, International Boundary and Water Commissions, and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission, will be key to accomplishing these objectives.

## **ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES**

The Pilot has:

- Assessed Paso del Indio candidate site for potential redevelopment. The assessment indicated that no contamination exists.

The Pilot is:

- Developing an inventory of all brownfields in Laredo;
- Conducting site assessments to determine the extent of environmental contamination and most appropriate remediation options that will be required at the Texas Mexican Railway property;
- Conducting outreach to current property owners, realtors, prospective buyers, and lending institutions to educate them about the City's brownfields effort with the objective of expediting environmental revitalization; and
- Conducting further public meetings to disseminate information and gain public input into the brownfields process.

## **LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES**

Experience with the Laredo Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- EPA and the Texas Natural Resource Conservation Commission support the City's program by conducting sampling and analysis activities.
- Both the local community college and the Rio Grande International Study Center will play important roles in all brownfields redevelopment efforts, including the implementation of community involvement programs.
- The City will implement the project under the authority of the International Water Boundary Commission with a range of possible funding mechanisms in accordance with the Texas Open Meetings Law.